

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/vehicle-road related;
Transportation/parkway

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/vehicle-road related;
Transportation/parkway

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Other/parkways
Other/NPS landscape architecture

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____
walls _____
roof _____
other steel, concrete, asphalt, stone,
native vegetation

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

As one of the nation's premier parkways, George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) comprises 7,146 acres and extends 38.3 miles in association with the Potomac River. The initial or southern section of the parkway, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, which opened in November 1932, extends 15.2 miles from the Arlington Memorial Bridge to the Gateway to President George Washington's at home at Mt. Vernon. The parkway commemorates the first president, preserves the natural setting, and provides a quality entryway for visitors to the nation's capital.

The northern section of the parkway runs on opposite sides of the Potomac River from Arlington Memorial Bridge to the Capital Beltway/Interstate 495, a distance of 9.7 miles in Virginia, and the 6.6 mile Clara Barton Parkway (renamed - 1989) in Maryland. This portion protects scenic vistas, contains numerous historical and archeological resources, and serves as another quality entryway into Washington, D.C. All but a small portion of the parkway north of Chain Bridge, in the District, opened during late 1965 on land acquired by the cooperating states, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCP&PC), and the National Park Service. The portion to Chain Bridge reached completion in 1968.

For purposes of this parkway nomination the multiple property nomination historic context statement, "Parkways Of The National Capital Region, 1913 to 1965," is attached to this document.

HISTORY OF THE PARKWAY

Early references to a system of parks connected by parkways, in Washington, D.C., and surrounding area, laid the groundwork for implementation of the McMillan Plan proposed in 1902. Members of the McMillan Commission envisioned "drives along the palisades of the Potomac above Georgetown to Great Falls and down the River to Mount Vernon."¹ These drives had certain definitions:

Parkways or ways through or between parks; distinguished from highways or ordinary streets by the dominant purpose of recreation rather than movement; restricted to pleasure vehicles, and arranged with regard for scenery, topography and similar features rather than for directness.²

Preserving the palisades had been advocated for a number of years as part of a design to protect the entire Potomac corridor past the capital to Great Falls. The McMillan Commission report stated the landscape should be "safeguarded in every way."³ It went on to add that scenic vistas, and historic sites and "the uncultivated hilltops of the

1. Charles W. Eliot II, "Preliminary Report, PARK SYSTEM FOR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, Submitted in Accordance with Program of Work Adopted August, 1926," December, 1926, p. 1. National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 4.

2. Ibid., p. 20.

3. Potomac Palisades Task Force Final Report, Arlington County Virginia, August 1990, p. 4-13.

☐ See continuation sheet

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Virginia Palisades," along the route, could be viewed better by travelers and local residents from a parkway on the Maryland side.⁴

For Charles Eliot, NCP&PC official, the 28-mile corridor along the Potomac would capture many "inspirational values." He believed "no area in the United States combine[s] so many historical monuments in so small a district as the Potomac River Valley in the Washington region."⁵

The proposed parkway would link with Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, which began as an idea in Alexandria, Virginia, in 1886, but did not receive authorization until May 1928. Urgency because of the approaching bicentennial of Washington's birth in 1932, however, finally prompted action leading to the opening of the parkway in that year. In the midst of this GWMP obtained strong endorsement from the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930. Before passage of that act, various threats to the scenic values of the proposed route surfaced regularly. Representative Cramton urged the nation to protect the area because

the palisades of the Potomac are daily being blasted, serious industrial encroachments threaten, wooded areas are being destroyed, and power interests have seriously urged replacement of the unique and outstanding natural beauties of Great Falls and the gorge of the Potomac with man-made reservoirs of much more commonplace, artificial beauty.⁶

Proponents spoke in the broadest of terms, linking the area sought to the desire of the populace at large, and the overwhelming role of President Washington in the history of the United States. To do less, went the argument, would be to ignore the wishes of the American people. Several organizations also lobbied for the bill, including the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Institute of Architects, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Garden Society of America, and the American Civic Association.⁷ In May 1930, the bill became law (see the section on "Legislation") with a sizable (given the economic condition of the United States) appropriation of \$33.5 million.

To acquire the land, Congress authorized \$7.5 million to the NCP&PC, to be matched by the bordering states of Virginia and Maryland in money or in long-term, interest-free loans. Half of the cost of acquiring the land was the basic arrangement necessary with state governments or "political subdivisions thereof." Assistance came from two organizations formed specifically for the parkway project: the George Washington Memorial Parkway Association, Inc., and the George Washington Memorial Parkway Fund, Inc. The former group supported the effort by forming state chapters that, in turn, "impress[ed] upon the people the necessity of guarding the beauty of the Nation's Capital by preserving its historic river and enlisting their aid in forwarding the proposed parkway."⁸ Aid for the association came from the latter (fund) group, which took temporary title to recently acquired land. Both groups, however, had little to do during the Great Depression.

Early estimates for the cost of land came to \$5.5 million in Maryland and Virginia. By the summer of 1933, 390 of an estimated 6,100 acres had been acquired.⁹ Money for such

4. Ibid.

5. Charles W. Eliot II, "The George Washington Memorial Parkway," *Landscape Architecture*, Vol. XXII, April 1932, p. 191.

6. Press Release, Congressman Louis C. Cramton, January 27, 1930, p. 1, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2774.

7. Ibid., p. 2.

8. Washington Evening Star, February 17, 1933, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 3.

9. Memorandum from Demaray (Acting Director, National Park Service) to the Secretary of the Interior, July 22, 1933, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2774. As of April 1988, George Washington Memorial Parkway covers 7,146 acres.

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purchases stemmed from formal agreements drafted between the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the state government's subscribing monies.¹⁰ That same summer, the Commonwealth of Virginia allocated \$25,000 with the presumption that Arlington and Fairfax counties would pledge similar amounts. The NCP&PC budgeted \$50,000 for matching monies. Once the United States secured title to lands acquired, the cost of development would be borne by the federal government.

Because land acquisition moved slowly, interested parties made various attempts to speed things along. One such effort came from a proposal by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. After explaining the background of planning for a parkway along the river and reiterating the amount of land in government ownership, Ickes stated what land needed to be acquired. Finally, he asked:

Would you be willing to authorize the purchase of the foregoing areas? Their acquisition is needed for the work of the Emergency Conservation Work Camps and would seem to be in line with your policy to buy additional lands in the south for that purpose.¹¹

President Roosevelt had more than a passing interest in the project. Earlier, in the spring of 1933, he had made an inspection trip to the Great Falls area, evidenced by the NCP&PC preparing a briefing package for him for the tour.¹² This suggests that key members of the administration carried the day as a first unit of the parkway received authorization, and \$280,000 was made available in mid-summer 1934.

To begin the parkway project, a working arrangement suggested by C. Marshall Finnan, superintendent of the National Capital Parks, initiated an interbureau agreement.¹³ The Bureau of Public Roads assumed the lead, doing studies and planning for the parkway; review and approval was reserved for the National Capital Parks.

The director of the National Park Service in conjunction with the Bureau of Public Roads, the Fine Arts Commission, and the Planning Commission shared the final decision on the location of the road.¹⁴ Conceptualization of the design took form, through the efforts of all the organizations and, especially, from the advice of Gilmore D. Clarke. He persuaded members of a delegation touring the proposed areas that the parkway should be designed with two lanes in each direction: "the rugged terrain lends itself more suitably for the construction of two narrow roads rather than one wide one."¹⁵ Clarke also advanced the idea that such a design would preserve the landscape (see section on "Design").

Private utility interests remained an important issue of the parkway project. In 1928, after protracted debate, Congress legislated a requirement that "no permit should be issued to any private interests for the development of water power in the Potomac River below the

10. "Agreement Between The National Capital Park And Planning Commission, The Board Of Commissioners Of Arlington County, Virginia, And The Governor Of Virginia," July 28-29, 1933, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 12. The Agreement comprises five pages of text, including several sections from the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930.

11. Ickes to President (Franklin D. Roosevelt), November 1933, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2774.

12. National Capital Park and Planning Commission, "The George Washington Memorial Parkway From Mount Vernon to Great Falls along the Potomac River," April 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Photo Album # 202. This is a 119-page briefing report specially prepared for President Roosevelt, including numerous maps and photographs and an excellent summary section on the competing interests for the Great Falls of the Potomac: water power versus park interests. (Hereafter referred to as Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Album.)

13. Finnan to Demaray, July 21, 1934, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 130.

14. Ibid.

15. Fine Arts Commission Chairman to National Capital Park and Planning Commission, June 1, 1934, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 130. At the time the chairman was Charles Moore.

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pool above Great Falls until further action of Congress."¹⁶ Again in 1930, Congress passed similar legislation while awaiting reports on the feasibility of private power development along the Potomac. Private utilities owned property on the river, principally Great Falls Power Company, which in 1904, bought land there for \$600,000. It owned 870 acres outright and half interest in another 82 acres.¹⁷ The company had "refused to sell unless the U.S. would agree never to develop hydro-electric power at the falls."¹⁸ Other property owners included Great Falls Farm Corporation, Washington and Old Dominion Railway, and the C&O Canal; they owned an additional 1,000 acres.¹⁹ Taking lines for the parkway corridor cut across the privately owned property, and in 1934, a request of \$3 million was made to the Bureau of the Budget for the purchase of many of these tracts.

Depression-era concerns and federal and state (Maryland and Virginia) programs precluded much activity in buying land and constructing the parkway. Times were hard, programs had short-term objectives, and the planning commission lost influence in overseeing orderly growth and development in the nation's capital. Several factors combined to delay the construction. Of course, land prices rose as land in the corridor changed hands and speculation added value to properties.

Various means of raising public consciousness about the project came from a variety of articles. In May 1935, *Review of Reviews* published an article written by Arno B. Cammerer, director of the National Park Service, exhorting Americans to support the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the preservation of much of the Potomac River corridor to Great Falls.²⁰ In late September 1936, a series of articles by W.A.S. Douglas in the *Washington Herald* advocated the same.²¹ The series presented thoughtful reasons for setting aside the Potomac River from Great Falls to Mount Vernon as a memorial to the first president. Douglas sought to mold opinion to "make it [the Potomac] the most beautiful waterway in America," and remove the neglect he observed along its course.²² Much of the appeal of Douglas's reasoning derived from the fact that congressmen looked after their respective state agendas to the neglect of the District of Columbia, which lacked a champion and proponent. It seemed clear to Douglas that the nation's capital needed to become the national masterpiece envisioned by key advocates through the years.

Working toward the same objective of raising public awareness, Max S. Wehrly, Commission Landscape Architect, completed two reports for the NCP&PC in 1937.²³ In these reports, he sought to move the project forward through informing the planning commission about the status. Arguments propounded took note of recreation and preservation of open space, and orderly and systematic urban development instead of sprawl. Wehrly underscored "the potential of a scenic parkway entrance to the Nation's Capital from the West."²⁴ He discussed the impact of a "high speed parkway" into the proposed park area and noted the road "may eventually form a major connection with a National parkway system" from northern Georgia to Maine.²⁵

The reports crystallized arguments for the parkway, its physical and historical setting, its role in the region, and the urgency of acquiring land at existing instead of

16. Nolen to Cammerer, September 22, 1934, p. 1, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 475.

17. Ibid., p. 2.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Arno B. Cammerer, "Push The Washington Parkway," *Review of Reviews*, May 1935, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2774.

21. *Washington Herald*, September 20 to September 28, 1936, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 17.

22. Ibid., September 21, 1936.

23. Max S. Wehrly, "National Capital Park & Planning Commission, Summary Report, George Washington Memorial Parkway - Virginia Side," September 16, 1937, unpublished; Max S. Wehrly, "National Capital Park & Planning Commission, General Report on George Washington Memorial Parkway, Upper Potomac," December 1937, unpublished; National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 17.

24. Wehrly, "... Upper Potomac," p. 8.

25. Wehrly, "... Virginia Side," p. 1.

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mounting prices. Passages from the reports found their way into print and became a topic of conversation as the planning and design effort proceeded toward the construction phase. Wehrly also wrote a report on improving Conduit Road (present MacArthur Boulevard) in Washington, D.C., and Maryland as one corridor for the parkway.²⁶

In the summer of 1935, an important section of George Washington Memorial Parkway obtained funding in the amount of \$224,236. The National Park Service singled out 1-1/4 miles from the Francis Scott Key Bridge to Columbia Island for construction, though it meant acquiring an expensive piece of property.²⁷ A powerhouse of the Washington and Old Dominion Railway had to be purchased, though by agreement the commonwealth of Virginia had responsibility for half of the cost. Director Cammerer's justification stated, "the immediate need for this particular section of the Parkway is to eliminate the heavy traffic flow and congestion from the District of Columbia through M Street to Georgetown."²⁸ He thought traffic would use the Arlington Memorial Bridge and the parkway thereby alleviating congestion on Francis Scott Key Bridge. Moreover, Cammerer convincingly argued for the need to obtain the railway property to prevent having to raise the eastbound lane to permit access for Rosslyn Plaza traffic.²⁹ Secretary Harold L. Ickes concurred, though he did insist that \$26,000 be expended for plantings to screen an "unsightly view of the railroad yards" just north of the Circle on the Mt. Vernon Highway at Alexandria.³⁰

That same year the Interior Department Appropriation Act made \$7.5 million available to the National Park Service for use on roads and trails. Of this amount the National Capital Parks secured nearly \$270,000, most of which it earmarked for the George Washington Memorial Parkway.³¹ The focus of work continued to be from Key Bridge to Columbia Island, though \$21,100 was designated for a survey from Arlington Memorial Bridge to Great Falls.³²

During the summer of 1937, parkway construction continued apace. Key figures in prioritizing the construction were drawn from the Bureau of Public Roads, National Park Service, and National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Key Bridge and a connector from Rosslyn Plaza Parkway to the bridge were designated to receive a portion of the \$270,000 remaining in the account of the Bureau of Public Roads.³³ Management also sought an appropriation in 1939 for a new span to permit the parkway to pass beneath Key Bridge to Spout Run.

Throughout the depression, members of the NCP&PC expressed concern about the nonparticipation of state and local governments in matching funds or buying and donating land for the parkway corridor. Such assistance had been specified in the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930. Writing in 1938, J.C. Nichols, member of the NCP&PC and real estate developer from Kansas City, went on record, "I feel the time has come when we should discontinue cooperation with Maryland unless these authorities will cooperate with us in a reasonable way on their part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway."³⁴ He added that only projects of "local benefit" were funded, whereas the greater objective of a parkway to Great Falls was neglected. The latter, according to Nichols, had both national and local significance. Furthermore, he advocated that the Maryland legislature act with "reasonable

26. Max S. Wehrly, "Brief of the Improvement of Conduit Road as it Relates to the George Washington Memorial Parkway District Line to Great Falls, Md., 1927-1937," unpublished report, National Archives, Record Group 328.

27. Cammerer to Ickes, June 26, 1935, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 475.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Tolson to Burlew, July 31, 1935, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 475.

31. Demaray to Burlew, February 8, 1938, National Archives, Record Group 79, 2774.

32. Ibid.

33. Superintendent to Director, September 20, 1937, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2774. C. Marshall Finnan was Superintendent of the National Capital Parks at that time.

34. Nichols to Delano, December 22, 1938, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 126.

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cooperation" soon, or he, like other commission members, would not vote for any other local projects.

This did not move the state of Maryland to action. It did, however, cause Prince Georges County to proceed, no doubt at the prodding of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which in turn had been pressured by the NCP&PC. The county did not anticipate any participation by the state and inquired about passing legislation of its own to match monies for land acquisition. T.S. Settle, secretary of the NCP&PC responded that a county could do just that and sent along copies of legislation passed by Virginia in 1930.³⁵ That act gave recognition to the parkway project and authorization to "the political subdivisions along the route to cooperate with the National Government and make contributions for same."³⁶

Virginia appropriated \$25,000 in 1932, with the provision that county governments do the same. Arlington County complied, and the \$50,000 total, after a like amount of matching federal funds, was used to buy land of unit No. 1 - Key Bridge area.³⁷ Again in 1938, the Virginia general assembly appropriated \$50,000 with the same caveat for local governments.³⁸ Finally, in 1939, Maryland began to move toward participation when the legislature passed an act permitting Montgomery County "to issue and sell \$150,000 worth of bonds to match a similar amount from the National Capital Park and Planning Commission."³⁹ They designated this money for purchase of land in Montgomery County between the District line and Great Falls. That same year, the NCP&PC sought a supplemental appropriation from Congress for a like amount. A rationale in the House document points to the urgency of moving to acquire the land because of the rising values and continued development in the parkway corridor.⁴⁰

Before World War II, planning for the parkway to extend all the way to Great Falls continued. In fact, an estimate of \$1 million for purchase of land above the falls underscored the need to acquire the land quickly before land values rose even more.⁴¹ The estimate, based upon \$265,000 per mile, reflected a road on both sides of the river for about 2 miles to a bridge site proposed above the falls.

A problem that surfaced during World War II for the Maryland portion to Great Falls dampened the parkway efforts. Writing to the Park Service director, Associate Director A.E. Demaray pointed out that the Capper-Cramton Act contained a provision that stated "no money shall be expended by the United States for the construction of said highway on the Maryland side of the Potomac except as part of the Federal Aid Highway Program."⁴² Under that program, monies could not be used to construct a highway on lands owned by the United States. Because much land had already been purchased, an act had to be passed to permit the parkway to continue. Therefore, Demaray had an amendment drawn to allow monies to be expended so that when World War II ended, work could continue. The amendment eventually passed and became law in August 1946, though by April 1945 Acting Superintendent Harry T. Thompson, National Capital Parks, reported that all the land needed had been purchased.⁴³

Until final passage, various schemes kept the project from losing momentum. The strategy interpreted that Federal Aid Highway Program funds could be expended for planning

35. Settle to Duckett, March 9, 1939, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 126.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. 76th Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives, Document No. 437, p. 2, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2835.

40. Ibid., p. 3.

41. Nolen to Keddy, February 19, 1940, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2774.

42. Associate Director to Director, September 7, 1944, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2835.

43. Acting Superintendent, National Capital Parks to Chief Landscape Architect, April 4, 1945, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2835.

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and surveys, but not for construction.⁴⁴ It proved to be an approach whereby management would proceed until told to do otherwise, even to the point of not seeking the opinion of the comptroller general of the United States.⁴⁵ Concurrent with this activity, the project slowed considerably on the Virginia side because of a lack of funds for property acquisition. Only a small section of land above Key Bridge and near Lee Highway had been obtained.

In late October 1946, a summary of parkway activities to date reached Congressman Hatton W. Sumners of Texas.⁴⁶ U.S. Grant, III chairman of the NCP&PC, reported a "50 percent completion as to land acquisition," but little construction other than that for Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Land procurement above Key Bridge was to be completed in the winter and construction scheduled "up the valley of Spout Run" in 1947.⁴⁷ Over three-fourths of the land for the parkway in Montgomery County, Maryland, had been acquired by late 1946, but Prince Georges County had so little interest that it could not raise enough money to make the necessary match.

Chairman Grant of the NCP&PC summarized activity in Virginia, too. He believed that Fairfax County had made the least progress and that the outlook was bleak despite some of the most outstanding "high bluffs and tributary stream valleys on the Virginia side."⁴⁸ The better views of the gorge and falls also could be seen from the heights noted. Grant added that he hoped renewed local interest might return to pre-war levels. At the end of his report Grant expressed optimism that participation would begin and construction would continue on both sides of the Potomac.

During 1948, the Virginia Legislature made \$125,000 available for acquiring land in the corridor stretching from Spout Run to the Fairfax-Arlington county line. The area sought had become very active with real estate developers since the end of World War II, and the need to act on parkway matters seemed urgent. Grant hoped Arlington County would put up money soon to match that from the state and that already in hand from the federal government.⁴⁹ Surveys needed to be completed soon, given the rapidity of development in the area.

Persuasion about development did not always carry the day and other strategies to obtain matching funds were resorted to in the years to follow. A device used by Maryland permitted bonds to be issued and signed by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and by Montgomery and Prince Georges counties. When matured, these bonds could be redeemed by certified checks that permitted the release of dollars from the NCP&PC for the purchase of land. The commission sought to persuade Virginia to use the same approach and wrote an amendment to the Capper-Cramton Act permitting such.⁵⁰

At the 1952 session of the Virginia general assembly, \$150,000 was appropriated for matching federal funds on the parkway. This enabled Fairfax County to begin its first unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway extending from the Arlington County line and Old Georgetown Road. The roadway moved slowly up the Potomac as governments observed advantages to the facility and money became available in the postwar economy.

A breakthrough of sorts for the National Park Service came with the 1954 Federal Aid Highway Act. Given the difficulty of programming construction in advance, the act allowed contract authorization for national parkways for three fiscal years running. For the Park Service this meant being able to program construction in advance; for the parkway it portended more systematic progress toward completion. To coordinate with the change, other

44. Associate Director to Director, September 13, 1945, National Archives, Record Group 79, Box 2835.

45. Ibid.

46. Grant to Sumners, October 28, 1946, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 130.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., p. 2.

49. Grant to MacDonald, April 1, 1948, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

50. Settle to Nolen, April 24, 1950, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

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aspects of the project had to be advanced as a result, including the acquisition of land, which meant obtaining funding quickly.

As the Washington, D.C., area grew following World War II, development began to disperse around the suburban perimeters, affecting each of the parkways. In the course of seeking more money from Congress in 1956 to extend the GWMP parkway toward American Legion Bridge (Cabin John Bridge), the proposed move of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to the Langley, Virginia, area above Chain Bridge Road, became an issue. In a letter to CIA Director Allen W. Dulles, a National Park Service official elaborated on the time schedule and costs of extending the parkway above Spout Run. E.T. Scoyen placed the estimate at \$8.5 million for the 6 miles, including grading, structures, paving, and land acquisition costs.⁵¹ A timetable projected the section from Spout Run to Chain Bridge to be under contract by July 1, 1956, and that from Chain Bridge to Langley by June 1, 1957; paving for these sections would be underway during the fall of 1957 and 1958, respectively.⁵² Assisting these anticipated schedules were sizable commitments of money from Virginia governments. The commonwealth of Virginia and Fairfax County approved large sums of money for land purchases: \$100,000 in 1955, from the county line to the old Georgetown Road; \$400,000 for land between the county line and the CIA; and the NCP&PC anticipated \$325,000 more for land between the CIA and American Legion Bridge crossing of the Potomac.⁵³ These efforts related to other significant actions.

One such important effort, begun in 1955, sought to bring parks up to requirements of increased demand during the term of National Park Service Director Conrad L. Wirth. "Mission 66" as it came to be known, held promise for the parkway. Writing in 1956, Wirth anticipated completing the parkway to Great Falls "with the possible exception of the bridge across the Potomac."⁵⁴ He determined that it would be best to finish the section to the falls first and below Washington, D.C., last. Fiscal year construction programs for 1957-1959 included \$7,150,000 for work in Maryland and \$900,000 for Virginia. In addition, Director Wirth indicated that "\$8,000,000 of CIA funds will shortly become available for the sections in Virginia from Spout Run to the CIA site near Langley."⁵⁵ The estimate of the funds needed for the federal share of the land acquisition costs to complete the parkway came to \$2 million, which Wirth urged be programmed soon.

An obstacle to construction between the CIA offices and the capital beltway arose in 1959 when the agencies involved recommended a different alignment. This was due to increased costs caused by land that had steep slopes and several small creeks that needed bridging. Modifications sought by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads necessitated the Department of Commerce transfer land better suited for the parkway.⁵⁶ The request was negotiated at the secretarial level, and completion of the parkway section was set for 1961, providing "a continuous parkway facility from the American Legion Bridge to downtown Washington."⁵⁷

During the late 1950s, the Senate Appropriations Committee closely scrutinized requests for the parkway's "desirability and need." This resulted in the National Capital Park and Planning Commission contracting with Charles W. Eliot II, at a cost of \$5,000, to review plans for the Fairfax and Prince Georges counties' portions of the parkway still to be completed.⁵⁸ Eliot, a renowned landscape architect and professor at Harvard University, had had a long and intimate association with the parkway project. For seven years (1926-

51. Scoyen to Dulles, May 4, 1956, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

52. Ibid.

53. Finley to President, June 8, 1959, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

54. Wirth to Bartholomew, July 18, 1956, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

55. Ibid.

56. Assistant Secretary to Secretary, June 3, 1959, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

57. Ibid.

58. Charles W. Eliot, "Statement For Senate Committee On Interior And Insular Affairs, George Washington Memorial Parkway, July 11-12, 1957, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box 545/100.

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1933), he had served as city planner and director of the NCP&PC, during which time he wrote a report supporting a park system for the nation's capital.

Specific directions given to Eliot focused on whether to extend the parkway to Great Falls and Fort Washington. Land acquisition issues and the difficulties in engineering a parkway near the river in the vicinity of the gorge and Great Falls implied considerable expenditure of money, as would the design for a road on each side, plus a bridge over the Potomac above the falls. The Prince Georges issue was basically one of land acquisition difficulties from the District line to Fort Washington. After considerable study, Eliot concluded that the plans should move forward in Fairfax County so that the falls and palisades might be protected and preserved. He also concluded that the land to be acquired should more nearly approximate that of the original 1927 plan "in order to avoid any road construction, now or in the future, on the bluffs facing the river, and to safeguard the valleys of the side streams."⁵⁹ The 1939 plan had called for road building that would affect scenic areas and cost more. From the new beltway (circumferential highway), Eliot believed an adaptation of Route 193 (Old Georgetown Pike) might be used with an additional two lanes; at the top of Prospect Hill, traffic might be separated onto Old Dominion Drive, with a new parkway entrance to the area of Great Falls.⁶⁰ He went on to advocate preservation of areas through special-use permits or scenic easements, lifetime estates to some larger landowners, and a delay in recreational developments. Eliot believed the value for much that had been done, "depends on control of the bluffs and valleys on the Virginia side of the river."⁶¹

Regarding the section below the District to Fort Washington on the Maryland side, Eliot especially underscored the need to change the alignment because of buildings and subdivisions that had sprung up. Such development "will compel other revisions to the great loss of the project unless acquisition can proceed at an early date."⁶² He also argued for a wider right-of-way near Oxon Run and Fort Foote plus riparian rights around Broad Creek Bay and Swan Creek near Fort Washington.⁶³ Eliot concluded with a plea to build the parkway to Fort Washington as originally planned. He said this would be an integral part of a metropolitan system for preserving, protecting, and making resources accessible for those seeking recreational opportunities in the Washington, D.C., area. "The cooperation of the State and County authorities is assured. The building and subdivision activities along the way make early and vigorous action most desirable."⁶⁴

Despite Eliot's report, funding did not become available for extending the parkway to Fort Washington nor to Great Falls. Lack of cooperation among local, state, and federal governments prevented the parkway from reaching proposed limits, but other factors also contributed. Opposition surfaced from the real estate interests seeking profit from development, from the environmental community who wished to preserve resources along the corridor, and from proponents of the Interstate Highway Act, which gave motorists a means to travel great distances, as opposed to scenic drives. The amount of land used and the changes to the landscape in laying down the parkway from Spout Run upriver alarmed local residents who foresaw similar encroachment by the parkway up to Great Falls. These factors combined to prevent the construction of the parkway on both sides of the river to Great Falls and Mount Vernon.

Parkway development ultimately extended along both sides of the Potomac - a small portion on the Maryland side but most on the Virginia side. Sections reaching completion were opened for use, such as from Spout Run to the CIA in 1959, the westernmost Maryland

59. Ibid., p. 9.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Charles W. Eliot, "National Capital Planning Commission Report, Review Of Fairfax County And Prince Georges County Sections George Washington Memorial Parkway," July 8, 1957, p. 16, National Archives, Record Group 328, Box: Planning Files 1924-1967.

63. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

64. Ibid., p. 17.

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section in 1965 at the junction with MacArthur Boulevard. Today, George Washington Memorial Parkway has probably reached its limits, given the extensive development in the urban area and the escalating land values that preclude further land acquisition.

It should be noted that within the historic boundaries of the parkway are a number of other resources. Ones of major significance include the United States Marine Corps War (Iwo Jima) Memorial, the Netherlands Carillon, the former communities of New Philly and Little Italy, Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove, Memorial Avenue and the Hemicycle, Arlington House, Theodore Roosevelt Island, Great Falls Park, and Fort Marcy. On the Maryland side are the Clara Barton National Historic Site, and Glen Echo Park.

Legislation

Even before construction of Mount Vernon Memorial Highway could begin, legislation was introduced in Congress expanding upon the concept of a public project memorializing George Washington. The new plan complemented a 1924 act that called for the "comprehensive development of the park and playground system of the National Capital."⁶⁵

Early in 1929, H.R. 15524, the first measure legislating development of the parkway, was presented by the House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds. This legislation, as amended, specified that \$7 million be spent for acquisition and development of lands on both sides of the river — half of this cost to be reimbursed within five years by the states of Virginia and Maryland. The bill, drafted by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the commissioners of the District of Columbia, and the Bureau of the Budget, called for a route extending from Mount Vernon along the Virginia side of the Potomac River to Great Falls, except where the road passed through the city of Alexandria. Similarly, on the Maryland side the proposed route would extend from Fort Washington to Great Falls.⁶⁶ "This parkway, taking control of the banks of the Potomac from Mount Vernon where Washington lived, through the Capital which he founded, to Great Falls where he had his industrial dreams, has tremendous possibilities for scenic enjoyment and recreation on land and water."⁶⁷

Although H.R. 15524 passed the House of Representatives unanimously on February 27, 1929, the measure was not finally approved. Instead, an identical bill, H.R. 26, cosponsored by Senator Arthur Capper (R. Kansas), and Representative Louis C. Cramton (R. Michigan), chairmen of the District committee, was introduced in the next Congress late in 1929. The measure authorized \$33.5 million for establishment of a comprehensive park, parkway, and playground area near the capital.⁶⁸ In April 1930, the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia reported favorably on the bill, specifying that certain details be changed, but that the "prime objects" of the legislation remain intact. The purpose of the parkway was to develop and protect "scenic values of the National Capital," which were threatened by encroachment of residential and commercial interests. Enactment of the bill promised to "afford public control of the banks of the Potomac from Mount Vernon, where Washington lived, through the National Capital, which he founded, to Great Falls, where the old canal is a valuable relic of his work as an engineer."⁶⁹ Further, the parkway would "be a striking and suitable tribute to the Father of our Nation, and one in which the people of America will take just pride and enjoyment."⁷⁰ The bill won wide

65. U.S. Congress, House, *Acquisition, Establishment, and Development of the George Washington Memorial Parkway*, H. Rept. No. 2523, 70th Cong., 2nd sess., 1929, pp. 1, 3.

66. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4. For the views of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, and the Bureau of the Budget, see *ibid.*, pp. 5-8.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

68. U.S. Congress, House, *Acquisition, Establishment, and Development of the George Washington Memorial Parkway*, H. Rept. No. 55, 71st Cong., 2d sess., 1929; U.S. Congress, Senate, *Washington, the National Capital*, prepared by H.P. Caemmerer, S. Doc. No. 332, 71st Cong., 3rd sess., 1932, p. 122.

69. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

70. *Ibid.*

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endorsement from sundry institutions and individuals who urged its passage, and on May 29, 1930, it became law.⁷¹

The Capper-Cramton Act provided for development of the specified route in Virginia and Maryland, calling for the preservation and protection of both natural and historic resources, including the gorge and Great Falls of the Potomac, the old Patowmack Canal, and a part of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. Besides the roadway, the project included construction of access roads to Great Falls and a bridge over the river. Further, forts Washington, Foote, and Hunt were to become part of the parkway once they were no longer needed for military purposes. Administration of the completed parkway would be the responsibility of the director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the national capital. In a related act passed the same day, Congress provided \$1 million (increased to \$4 million the following year) to cover expenses incurred by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission in implementing the project.⁷² Subsequent House and Senate proposals called for clarifying the language of the act as it pertained to the transfer of Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and for providing adequate funding for the purchase of property deemed immediately essential for the parkway.⁷³ In the 1940s and 1950s, several measures were introduced to modify provisions of the act to permit additional land acquisition and land exchange.⁷⁴ On November 28, 1989, that portion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Maryland between Chain Bridge and MacArthur Boulevard was designated the Clara Barton Parkway.

PRESENT CONDITION

The George Washington Memorial Parkway extends through the coastal plain and Piedmont physiographic provinces. Upon leaving the coastal plain near the Francis Scott Key Bridge, the parkway dips and rises above the bluffs of the Potomac River palisades and on toward Great Falls. Hardwood forest dominates the route with an understory of laurel and holly. The median between the lanes is a grassy strip containing sparse shubbery and mature trees which is regularly mown.

Residential and commercial development along the parkway corridor has been regulated to the extent that above Key Bridge little evidence is identified from the roadway, though developments exist, including the Central Intelligence Agency headquarters and the Federal Highway Administration offices. The impact is greatest at Rosslyn, on the Virginia side of the parkway, principally between Key and Roosevelt bridges where a considerable amount of commercial high-rise development has occurred.

71. Ibid., pp. 8-9; U.S. Statutes at Large, XLVI, pp. 482-485.

72. Ibid., pp. 483, 484-485, 864, 1367; U.S. Congress, House, *National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Communication from the President of the United States transmitting Supplemental Estimate of Appropriation for the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, in the Sum of \$1,000,000.* H. Doc., No. 458, 71st Cong., 2nd sess., 1930, pp. 1-2; Frederick Gutheim, *Worthy of the Nation: The History of Planning for the National Capital* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), p. 198.

73. U.S. Congress, House, *Amend the Act for the Acquisition, Establishment, and Development of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.* H. Rept. No. 2628, 71st Cong., 3d sess., 1931; U.S. Congress, Senate, *To Amend Act Relating to George Washington Memorial Parkway.* S. Rept. No. 1658, 71st Cong., 3d sess., 1931. For discussion of these measures, especially H.R. 16218, see U.S. Congress, House, *Hearings Before the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, House of Representatives, January 28 and February 4 and 11, 1931, 71st Cong., 3d sess., passim.*

74. U.S. Congress, Senate, *Development of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Comprehensive Park, Parkway, and Playground System of the National Capital.* S. Rept. No. 1766, 79th Cong., 2d sess., 1946; U.S. Congress, House, *Providing for an Addition to the George Washington Memorial Parkway by the Transfer from the Administrator of General Services to the Secretary of the Interior of the Tract of Land in Arlington County, Va., Commonly Known as the Nevius Tract.* H. Rept. No. 1601, 82d Cong., 2d sess., 1952; U.S. Congress, House *Authorizing Land Exchanges for Purposes of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Montgomery County, Md.* H. Rept. No. 2597, 85th Cong., 2d sess., 1958; U.S. Congress, Senate, *Land Exchanges, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Montgomery County, Md.* S. Rept. No. 2210, 85th Cong., 2d sess., 1958.

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Bridges

When construction extended the parkway above the Arlington Memorial Bridge in Virginia, the Federal Highway Administration constructed a total of 27 bridges: 10 road bridges and 17 over streams. One pedestrian bridge crosses the parkway from the parking lot access to Theodore Roosevelt Island. It was built in 1989. Along the corridors of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Virginia, above the Arlington Memorial Bridge, 17 bridges cross one or both lanes of the parkway or the parkway crosses on them (see inventory which follows). Three of them were built in the late 1940s, but most between 1959 and 1964. The majority are of the continuous girder and floor-beam design, made of steel and concrete, with some stone clad abutments and pediments.

On the Clara Barton Parkway are nine bridge structures constructed between 1961 and 1968. Two pedestrian bridges cross it. Most are steel and concrete of the continuous box or tee-beam design.

Culverts

There are approximately 35 culverts along the George Washington Memorial Parkway, including the Clara Barton Parkway portion. Construction of these occurred in conjunction with bridge contracts or as part of a section of roadway proper. Most, such as the one at Minnehaha Creek on the Clara Barton Parkway, have stone cladding similar to bridges on the parkway, and are contributing elements to it. A variety of forms may be identified: small tubes, multiple tubes, and some box culverts.

Walls and Miscellaneous Structures

There are 3.67 miles of retaining walls and 12.05 of barrier walls along the Virginia side of the parkway upriver from Memorial Bridge, and 1.54 miles of retaining walls and .44 miles of barrier walls along the Clara Barton Parkway. Upriver from the Francis Scott Key Bridge are several stretches of walls between the north and southbound lanes, and along the outside lanes. Walls also delimit the overlooks along the parkway. Numerous drop inlets are found along the various lanes of the parkway. Some 798 are along the Virginia side and 175 on the Maryland side.

Several portions of the parkway have guardrail made of concrete, wood, or steel. And some stone clad or concrete lined ditches may be located along the routes. Stone clad retaining walls are used in several locations, especially on the Clara Barton Parkway.

A portion of the Clara Barton Parkway near Lock 8 of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal is cantilevered to accommodate north and southbound lanes in an area of topographical constraints.

Landscape

The landscape values for the George Washington Memorial Parkway have always been the preservation of scenic and esthetic qualities associated with the Potomac River valley. Extending from the coastal plain past the fall line to the piedmont, the valley area is of continuing concern including the palisades and the tree covered slopes, flowering understory, steep-sided creek valleys (runs), and hilltop vistas. The latter provides a glimpse of the monumental core of Washington, D.C., a central purpose for the establishment and continuing protection of the parkway.

In general, references to the design concepts used for George Washington Memorial Parkway are difficult to locate. The most succinct statement about design was made by Charles W. Eliot II, who described it as containing "grade separations, few entrances, border roads for service of abutting property, and a right-of-way never less and often much more than two hundred feet."

Planting plans exist for the Mount Vernon portion, the interchanges from Route 123 to Turkey Run, and the area near the David Taylor Naval Ship Research and Development Center of the Clara Barton Parkway. The CIA funded the planting plan for the upper portion on the Virginia side and it consists of plotting hardy native plant stock: shrubs, flowering trees, and deciduous trees.

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Opinions by designers pointed out American elm should not be mixed in a "border plantation," and while pine might overpower other plantings, it would be satisfactory for use along the parkway. Of special concern seemed to be the need for taking lines on the slopes which would control the skyline and serve as opportunities for vistas of Washington's monumental core and skyline.

INVENTORY OF STRUCTURES

* = noncontributing

The order of listing for the structures in Virginia is the same as the Federal Highway Administration parkway bridge inspection reports (mileage distances given upstream from structure location to the Interstate 495 (Capital Beltway) interchange with the George Washington Memorial Parkway). Initial referent points are given in mileage from Interstate 495; further downstream the referent point is Interstate 395 (Shirley Highway); and for Spout Run Parkway the referent point is the junction of Interstate 66 (Custis Memorial Parkway) and U.S. Route 29 (Lee Highway).

Virginia

- Dead Run (3300-001P): Built 1963; 0.5 miles to Interstate 495 (Capital Beltway); steel, continuous girder and floor-beam system; four lanes, three spans, 308 feet; carries parkway over Dead Run.
- Turkey Run (3300-002P): Built 1961; 1.4 miles to Interstate 495; continuous girder and floor-beam system; four lanes, four spans, 405 feet; carries parkway over Turkey Run and access road.
- CIA Overpass (3300-003P): Built 1959; 2.2 miles to Interstate 495; prestress concrete, stringer/multi-beam or girder; two lanes, three spans, 167 feet; carries CIA entrance ramp over parkway.
- Route 123 Overpass (3300-004P): Built in 1959; 3.8 miles to Interstate 495; concrete stringer, multi-beam or girder; five lanes, three spans; 169 feet; carries Virginia Route 123 over parkway.
- Pimmit Run (3300-005P): Built in 1959; 4.6 miles to Interstate 495; steel continuous girder and floor beam; four lanes, three spans, 353 feet; carries parkway over Pimmit Run.
- Glebe Road (3300-006P): Built in 1959; 5.0 miles to Interstate 495; steel continuous girder and floor-beam system; four lanes, four spans, 544 feet; carries parkway over Glebe Road.
- Gulf Branch (3300-007P): Built in 1959; 5.4 miles to Interstate 495; steel continuous girder and floor beam; four lanes, three spans, 424 feet; carries parkway over Gulf Branch.
- Donaldson Run (3300-008P): Built in 1959; 5.8 miles to Interstate 495; steel, continuous girder and floor-beam system; four lanes, three spans, 429 feet; carries parkway over Donaldson Run.
- Windy Run (3300-009P): Built in 1959; 7.1 miles to Interstate 495; steel continuous, girder and floor-beam system; four lanes, four spans, 387 feet; carries parkway over Windy Run.
- Spout Run Arch (3300-010P): Built in 1959; 7.8 miles to Interstate 495; concrete, arch-deck; two lanes, one span, 335 feet; carries parkway eastbound lanes over Spout Run and Spout Run Parkway.
- Spout Run (3300-011P): Built in 1958; 7.8 miles to Interstate 495; concrete, frame; two lanes, one span, 32 feet; carries parkway westbound lanes over Spout Run.
- Rosslyn Circle Ramp (3300-012P): Built in 1959; 8.4 miles to Interstate 495; steel, stringer/multi-beam girder; two lanes, one span, 134 feet; carries parkway westbound over eastbound parkway.
- Little River Inlet (3300-013P): Built in 1964; 1.7 miles from Interstate 395; steel, stringer/multi-beam girder; four lanes, one span, 193 feet; carries parkway westbound over the Boundary Channel.

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Route 50 Westbound over Parkway (3300-014P): Built in 1946; 1.6 miles from Interstate 395; steel, girder and floor-beam system; two lanes, three spans, 365 feet; carries Arlington Boulevard and Route 50 over eastbound parkway.

Southbound Spout Run Parkway (3300-029P): Built in 1949; 0.9 miles to Route 29/Interstate 66; concrete, arch-deck; two lanes, one span, 35 feet; carries southbound Spout Run Parkway over Spout Run.

Northbound Spout Run Parkway (3300-039P): Built in 1947; 0.5 miles from Route 29/Interstate 66; concrete, continuous box culvert; two lanes, one span, 20 feet; carries northbound Spout Run Parkway over Spout Run.

Pedestrian Overpass (042-T): Built in 1989 by Arlington County; 0.34 miles upstream from the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge; carries pedestrians across parkway.

Other noncontributing resources, though several are already on the National Register of Historic Places, include: Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge, Francis Scott Key Bridge, Chain Bridge, the pedestrian bridge near Theodore Roosevelt Island, and the Interstate 495 bridges and exchange complex on both sides of the Potomac River at the northern end of the parkway.

The order of listing for the Clara Barton Parkway follows that noted above and the referent point again is Interstate 495 (Capital Beltway). All structures are listed in downstream sequence along the Potomac River except the first one, Carderock. It is upstream from the Interstate 495 interchange.

Maryland

Carderock (3300-030P): Built in 1962; 0.63 miles upstream from Interstate 495; prestress concrete, stringer/multi-beam girder; two lanes, one span, 120 feet; carries Carderock access connection over parkway.

79th Street Cabin John (3300-031P): Built in 1961; 0.7 miles to Interstate 495; concrete, frame; four lanes, one span, 31 feet; carries parkway over 79th Street.

Cabin John Overpass (3300-032P): Built in 1962; 1.3 miles to Interstate 495; prestress concrete, stringer/multi-beam girder; two lanes, one span, 120 feet; carries Ericsson Road over parkway.

Cabin John Creek/Cabin John Parkway (3300-033P): Built in 1963; 1.6 miles to Interstate 495; concrete continuous, box beam/multiple girders; four lanes, three spans, 378 feet; carries parkway over Cabin John Creek.

Westbound Lane (3300-034P): Built in 1961; 2.5 miles to Interstate 495; concrete, continuous tee beam; two lanes, three spans, 217 feet; carries future westbound parkway over westbound parkway.

*Sycamore Island Pedestrian (3300-035T): Built in 1968; 2.8 miles to Interstate 495; concrete, continuous box, single girder; six spans, 221 feet; carries pedestrians across parkway.

*Brookmont Pedestrian (3300-036T): Built in 1967; 4.3 miles to Interstate 495; concrete, continuous, box, single girder; nine spans, 375 feet; carries pedestrians across parkway.

Little Falls Branch (3300-037P): Built in 1961; 4.5 miles to Interstate 495; prestress concrete, stringer multi-beam girder; two lanes, one span, 59 feet; carries parkway over Little Falls Branch.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☒ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☒ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

George Washington

Clara Barton

Architect/Builder

NPS and Bureau of Public Roads (Federal Highway Administration)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

George Washington Memorial Parkway (and the portion now named the Clara Barton) should be included in the National Register of Historic Places as nationally significant under criteria (listed in priority order) (C) landscape architecture and (B) commemoration of George Washington, and Clara Barton. One of the last parkways completed among the many in the eastern United States, GWMP preserves a sizable amount of territory once familiar to George Washington.

Beginning with the McMillan Plan of 1902, planners discussed a roadway linking Mount Vernon with Great Falls on the Potomac. This continued to be an issue, though somewhat downplayed, during the early discussions of Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. It rose again with the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930 however, which set in motion the means to make the parkway a reality. Well-known landscape architects, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Charles W. Moore II, and Gilmore D. Clarke (heavily involved in Westchester County parkways, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, and Blue Ridge Parkway) invested much time and energy in the parkway. These individuals together with the National Park Service, the Bureau of Public Roads, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Commission of Fine Arts, and several local governments kept the idea alive, shepherded it through, and assisted in completion of the parkway. Efforts took on more significance with the opening of Mount Vernon Memorial Highway in 1932 when the public could see the value of such a roadway. As a parkway, GWMP has several areas of significance: community planning and development, landscape architecture, transportation, commemoration, and preservation.

One of the reasons George Washington Memorial Parkway is nationally significant is that it is associated with a long and continuous planning effort for the Washington, D.C., region. Though a direct linkage to L'Enfant's plan cannot be established, his plan laid the basis for subsequent planning efforts. In 1898, the Permanent System of Highways Plan (Highway Act of 1898) established a systematic plan to complete in orderly fashion what L'Enfant had begun. Specific efforts incorporating GWMP were then included in the Park Improvement Commission of the District of Columbia, commonly known as the McMillan Plan of 1902. The principal landscape architect of that plan, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., pushed for parks that would be intensively used, a democratic approach. He urged connections between parks including a road network that would extend parks to the perimeters of the regional city, in particular to Mount Vernon, and along both sides of the Potomac to Great Falls.

In the 1927 National Capital Park and Planning Commission report, Eliot and Olmsted stated the importance of parks and linkages between them and gave a strong endorsement to the McMillan Commission's findings for a parkway along the Potomac. Despite opposition from the public utilities at Great Falls, the planning commission vigorously promoted a parkway, by the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930. This act established the funding and planning for the

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parkway, creating the means for design and construction between 1930 and 1966. Intended as a cooperative venture among various levels of government, the Capper-Cramton Act accomplished most of what had been set in motion at the turn of the century.

Another major reason for the GWMP's significance involves George Washington's association with the Potomac River corridor. His enterprising efforts to tap the hinterlands of the new country through canals along the Potomac are still evident around Great Falls (Patowmack Canal), and the route to and from his Mount Vernon home often took him along the Virginia shore of the parkway route.

Likewise, the selection of the site for the nation's new capital was his, as was the selection of L'Enfant to design the capital. Like the older Mount Vernon section, the upper parkway commemorates the life of Washington. It provides unparalleled views of the city he founded and the river he traveled.

The commemoration of Clara Barton, for whom a portion of the parkway was named on November 28, 1989 by an act of Congress, is notable as well. A key figure on battlefields during the Civil War, she founded the American Red Cross, and her home at Glen Echo overlooks the Maryland side of the parkway.

The planning and design of GWMP has associative significance as well. The vision of McMillan, Capper, and Cramton was put into plans and designs by Olmsted, Eliot, and Clarke. Clarke remained especially involved in the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway project, as well as the Baltimore-Washington and Blue Ridge parkways. At the same time, he served as chairman of the influential Commission of Fine Arts. Previously, Olmsted and Eliot had extensive planning and design experience in Boston and Washington, D.C., and long public service careers as landscape architects.

Another significant aspect is the function of GWMP as a designed entryway into the nation's capital: part of a strong effort over the years to provide visitors with entries appropriate to the important role played by Washington, D.C., in the national and international community. As such, it provides a picturesque approach to the monumental core of the capital, dipping and rising with the landscape, providing glimpses of the Potomac River, the monuments, and the federal city beyond.

Finally, the GWMP has significance as an instrument of conservation and protection of scenic and recreational resources. By its very existence, it prevents development along the river corridor, and removes development potentially detrimental to the natural resources. Great Falls and the palisades are the prime recipients of this protection, which prevented them from becoming hydroelectric sites. Other areas that have received protection include the resources associated with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, Patowmack Canal, and even the viewsheds in a variety of locales along the length of the upper parkway.

Today, burgeoning commuter traffic provides the heaviest use of the parkway. Unfortunately, commuters experience it unlike that intended by the originators. The fit of an essentially rural setting with a developing regional urban community is difficult at best.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Record Group 79, National Park Service
Record Group 328, National Capital Park and Planning Commission
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- U.S. Congress, House. *Authorizing Land Exchanges for Purposes of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Montgomery County. Md.* H. Rept. No. 2597, 85th Cong., 2d sess., 1958.

☒ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
has been requested
- ☒ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☒ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Specify repository:

National Archives and Record Service

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 7146

UTM References

A
Zone Easting Northing

C

B

D

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated district is delineated by an elongated polygon whose vertices are marked by the UTM coordinate points A-Z for the George Washington Memorial Parkway (south side of Potomac River) and points AA-00 for the Clara Barton portion (North side of Potomac River) of the George Washington Memorial Parkway

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary is coterminous with the original right-of-way determined by the Bureau of Public Roads (Federal Highway Administration) and maintained by the National Park Service. It encompasses numerous features: bridges, culverts, landscape architectural elements and natural topographic features.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL PARKWAY
(South of Potomac River)

	<u>ZONING/EASTING</u>	<u>NORTHING</u>	<u>USGS QUAD</u>
A	18/311180	4315470	Falls Church, VA - MD
B	18/313920	4315040	Falls Church, VA - MD
C	18/315160	4313440	Falls Church, VA - MD
D	18/315340	4311840	Falls Church, VA - MD
E	18/316280	4311290	Washington West, DC - MD
F	18/318460	4308240	Washington West, DC - MD
G	18/320680	4307570	Washington West, DC - MD
H	18/321200	4305800	Washington West, DC - MD
I	18/320930	4305680	Washington West, DC - MD
J	18/320720	4306130	Washington West, DC - MD
K	18/320230	4306110	Washington West, DC - MD
L	18/320220	4306640	Washington West, DC - MD
M	18/320730	4306600	Washington West, DC - MD
N	18/320520	4307320	Washington West, DC - MD
O	18/318200	4307250	Washington West, DC - MD
P	18/318680	4307640	Washington West, DC - MD
Q	18/317240	4309000	Washington West, DC - MD
R	18/317000	4309840	Washington West, DC - MD
S	18/314910	4311330	Falls Church, VA - MD
T	18/314430	4313560	Falls Church, VA - MD
U	18/314080	4313860	Falls Church, VA - MD
V	18/313620	4312570	Falls Church, VA - MD
W	18/312840	4312800	Falls Church, VA - MD
X	18/312640	4314580	Falls Church, VA - MD
Y	18/311410	4314300	Falls Church, VA - MD
Z	18/310840	4314700	Falls Church, VA - MD

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CLARA BARTON PARKWAY

(George Washington Memorial Parkway)

	<u>ZONING/EASTING</u>	<u>NORTHING</u>	<u>USGS QUAD</u>
AA	18/309120	4316490	Falls Church, VA - MD
BB	18/309980	4315790	Falls Church, VA - MD
CC	18/310710	4315850	Falls Church, VA - MD
DD	18/310840	4316220	Falls Church, VA - MD
EE	18/312860	4315760	Falls Church, VA - MD
FF	18/314180	4315760	Falls Church, VA - MD
GG	18/316440	4312940	Washington West, DC - MD
HH	18/317000	4310910	Washington West, DC - MD
II	18/316890	4310910	Washington West, DC - MD
JJ	18/316000	4312000	Washington West, DC - MD
KK	18/315320	4313630	Falls Church, VA - MD
LL	18/314030	4315300	Falls Church, VA - MD
MM	18/311650	4315670	Falls Church, VA - MD
NN	18/309830	4315550	Falls Church, VA - MD
OO	18/308430	4316580	Falls Church, VA - MD





29
228

420 000 FEET (MD.)

GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL PARKWAY

TURKEY RUN PARK

UTM REFERENCES

A. 18/311180 /4315470

B. 18/313920 /4315040

C. 18/315160 /4313440

D. 18/315340 /4311840

S. 18/314910 /4311330

T. 18/314430 /4313560

U. 18/314080 /4313860

V. 18/313620 /4312570

W. 18/312840 /4312800

X. 18/312640 /4314580

Y. 18/311410 /4314300

Z. 18/310840 /4314700

AA. 18/309120 /4316490

BB. 18/309980 /4315790

CC. 18/310710 /4315850

DD. 18/310840 /4316220

EE. 18/312860 /4315700

FF. 18/314180 /4315760

KK. 18/315320 /4313620

LL. 18/314030 /4315300

MM. 18/311650 /4315670

NN. 18/309830 /4315550

OO. 18/308430 /4316580

